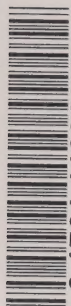


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USE OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION  
WITHIN THE  
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

JUNE, 1984



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USE OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION WITHIN THE  
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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FINAL REPORT

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Policy and Planning Branch  
June, 1984

Ministry of Environment & Energy  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to a new emphasis now being placed on better coordination and use of demographic information in government, the Ministry of the Environment has conducted an internal survey to identify current uses of demographic data in its projects and activities. Demographic data are defined in this context as characteristics of populations of interest, such as age distribution, number of households or urban versus rural distribution. While such information does not play as prominent a role in MOE's activities as they do in other ministries (particularly in the Social Policy Field), demographic data provide important input in a number of areas within the Ministry, such as the use of population projections in assessing the expansion requirements of sewer and water treatment services.

The survey queried all branches and strategic projects within the Ministry, canvassing staff on: a) current uses of demographic data and their importance in technical/policy decisions; b) the adequacy of data sources; and c) potential new uses of such data.

Fourteen branches and projects within the Ministry (primarily in the Environmental Planning and Regional Operations Divisions) currently use demographic data in carrying out 21 types of activities. The major uses of such data are: a) estimating future requirements for water, sewage and waste facilities; b) calculating pollution loadings through population estimates; and c) identifying populations currently or potentially affected by environmental pollution, conditions or programs. Current and/or future projections of population size comprise the primary type of demographic data used in

Ministry projects (utilized in 81% of project types). Other types of data used are current or projected number of households, urban versus rural population distribution, per capita income and household size. In most cases, data are required for municipal or service area populations, although in some cases the relevant population is defined by a geographic or environmental region, such as a watershed.

The importance of demographic information in program planning and decision-making varies from project to project, in some cases providing critical input into major decisions, as in determining the design capacity of water and sewage facilities. Overall, in 62% of the project types, such data were considered "very important" in making decisions and plans.

The primary source of demographic data used by Ministry staff is the Municipal Directory (published by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing), followed by census data furnished by STATISTICS CANADA, municipal governments, other provincial ministries, consultants and elsewhere in MOE. The Statistical Services Branch (SSB) of the Ministry of Treasury and Economics is responsible for population projections to be used within the Provincial government. To date, however, MOE has made little use of SSB data.

The adequacy of these data sources is mixed - in some cases branches reported the data to be satisfactory, but close to half indicated some gap or limitation. The most prominent gap is a lack of population data (current or projected) for specific areas of concern, such as small communities (e.g. hamlets) and environmentally defined areas such as watersheds. Other commonly reported problems involve data which are out of date and discrepancies in information



between different sources. Little coordination or sharing of data appears to be taking place among different branches within the Ministry.

This survey is intended to provide a basis for further examination of demographic data needs within the Ministry. To this purpose, the following recommendations are provided.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Notify the Statistical Services Branch (Ministry of Treasury and Economics), through the Resource Policy Field Working Group, of MOE data needs not currently supplied through available sources. These needs may be shared by other ministries (such as MNR) and a joint request may be made to address these needs in subsequent data bases generated by the Provincial and/or Federal governments.
- 2) The Policy and Planning Branch continue to liaise with primary data users within MOE to identify and discuss in greater depth current limitations, data needs and potential improvements.
- 3) The Policy and Planning Branch act as a central clearing-house for demographic information within MOE, for use by all MOE branches as needed. The purpose of this clearing-house is to provide access to current data from all available sources and achieve greater consistency in the use of data both within MOE and with other government agencies.



- 4) Explore the feasibility of developing a standardized approach for transforming available data into non-municipal areas or aggregates relevant to MOE needs. This approach would probably require either the development of a new computerized data base or greater access to existing ones.



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## INTRODUCTION

In December 1982, a Cabinet Resolution was adopted in response to increasing concerns about duplication of demographic data collection and a recognition of the need for better communication between policy makers and statisticians within government. The Resolution directed the Policy Field Secretariat to monitor and report on the use of demographic information by different ministries. The Statistical Services Branch of the Ministry of Treasury and Economics was given the lead role in coordinating this activity and in general the use of demographic information within government. As part of its role, SSB established Working Groups in each Policy Field to serve as a liaison with line ministries, in terms of disseminating relevant demographic statistics and obtaining input on particular data needs.

While the Ministry of the Environment does not use demographic information to the extent that some ministries do (e.g. Health, Municipal Affairs and Housing), it does rely on population statistics for such purposes as forecasting future requirements for water and sewer services, waste planning studies and other specific projects. A Cabinet Submission on Demographics (August, 1982) identified MOE in the list of those ministries which are affected indirectly by demographic trends, such as geographic shifts in the provincial population.

The increased emphasis now being placed by government on better coordination and use of demographic data provides MOE with an opportunity to review its current uses of such information, and identify additional needs in this area. Such a review will provide a firm basis for having input

into the planning of new demographic studies and data bases that are now being developed by both the Provincial and Federal governments.

This report presents the first comprehensive review conducted on the use of demographic data within the Ministry of the Environment. It is intended to provide a basis for MOE's participation and input into the Resource Policy Field Working Group chaired by SSB and also to inform all levels of management within the Ministry. As a survey emphasizing breadth rather than depth, this report is intended to provide a broad overview from which further in-depth analysis can be carried out in specific areas where needed.

#### METHOD

A survey was conducted of all branches and strategic projects within the Ministry to identify the extent to which staff currently use, or might potentially use, demographic information (survey form is attached as an Appendix). The term "demographics" in this context refers to characteristics of populations of interest, at different levels of aggregation ranging from the Province to small villages. Demographic characteristics of most relevance to MOE include population size, number of households and/or dwelling units, geographic distribution (e.g. urban versus rural), household size (number of persons per household) and per capita income.

The survey canvassed staff in the following areas:

- a) current uses of demographic data;
- b) importance of such data in technical and/or policy decisions;



- c) data sources and their adequacy; and
- d) potential new uses to which either existing or new data could be usefully put.

Responses to the survey were received from all branches and strategic projects within the Ministry. The analysis of these responses provided below is organized according to the current Divisional and Branch structure of the Ministry.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

Fourteen branches/strategic projects, primarily in the Environmental Planning and Regional Operations Divisions, reported current use of demographic data in some capacity. The following discussion briefly outlines the uses indicated by each branch in terms of how the information is used, the adequacy of existing data sources, identified data needs and potential new applications.

### **A. Environmental Planning Division**

Three branches in this Division indicated some use of demographic data: Air Resources, Water Resources and Waste Management.

**Air Resources.** The Air Resources Branch uses demographic data in the operation of its Emissions Inventory Information System, carried out by the Air Quality and Meteorology Unit. This system generates a province-wide inventory of emission sources from a variety of sources, in most cases calculating estimates from demographic information where specific monitoring data are unavailable. Data on current population size, proportion of dwelling units type (e.g. single family houses,

apartment buildings) and usage of home heating fuel are used to estimate emissions from space heating sources. Vehicle emissions are calculated from data on current population, vehicle registration and total fuel consumption. Emissions from waste disposal loadings (e.g. incinerators) are estimated from population size, community size and levels of economic activity. These data are obtained from Statistics Canada (STATSCAN) and generally found to be adequate for the purpose.

No potential new uses for demographic information were identified by the Air Resources Branch.

**Water Resources.** The Water Resources Branch utilizes demographic data in two areas:

1) **Water and Sewer Services Management.** The Water Services and Pollution Control Section compiles information pertaining to the management of water and sewer services province-wide, primarily for use by other branches and senior management within MOE. Population statistics (municipal and rural populations, geographic distribution of populations) are used to calculate the population currently serviced by communal services, as well as identify additional populations that are potentially serviceable. The primary source for this information is the Municipal Directory (published annually by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing through 1984; henceforth every three years). This source is not considered adequate because it does not provide a breakdown of urban and rural components of either municipal or county populations. This makes it difficult to accurately identify both potentially serviceable and currently serviced populations.

2) **Watershed Basin Management Studies.** The Quality Protection Section conducts studies to both identify water and sewer service needs as well as protect and upgrade the



quality of provincial waters. Watershed studies frequently require the development of forecasts for future water supply and sewage treatment requirements, which are developed through the use of population growth projections for the region under study. Such forecasts are developed through the examination of various types of information, including historical growth patterns, projections generated elsewhere (e.g. SSB) and input from the communities themselves. Basin management studies are usually more comprehensive than watershed studies and require the identification of relevant land use characteristics within the river or lake basin under study, including the total number of households and the geographical distribution of population within the basin. Demographic data are obtained primarily from area municipal planning departments, supplemented by STATSCAN and provincial ministries (MMAH, MTE, MAF). These sources are considered generally adequate.

The Water Resources Branch did not indicate any potential new application of demographic information to their programs and activities.

**Waste Management.** Two areas were identified in which demographic data are currently used:

1) **Area Master Planning.** Branch staff assist municipalities in the development of long range area master plans for waste management. Demographic factors play an important role in the development of such plans because they typically cover a 20-year period, during which time significant demographic changes can substantially alter the quantity and types of waste generated. Current and projected population, as well as its distribution within the area are used to estimate per capita generation of waste types over a 20-year period as a means to determine future waste facility requirements.

The primary source of these data is population projections generated by the Statistical Services Branch within the Ministry of Treasury and Economics. Projections are also generated by some of the larger municipalities, although in the past these have often conflicted with SSB forecasts, which have typically projected lower rates of growth than municipal forecasts. When such conflicts arise, the Branch has attempted to reconcile them and, failing that, use a range of projections which incorporate the disparate estimates. More recently, municipalities have been revising their growth projections downward, thereby falling more into line with provincial estimates.

In many areas where population growth is small, information on current population size provided in the Municipal Directory is sufficient for projecting future populations.

2) **Source Separation Grant Program.** The Ministry operates a grant program to promote the development of source separation programs. Demographic information on current and projected population, urban-rural distribution, community size, number and size of households, and per capita income are used to estimate the volume of potentially recyclable material, which is a key factor in determining the economic and technical viability of proposed programs. These data are obtained from STATSCAN and the Municipal Directory, which are generally adequate for developing the prerequisite estimates, although it was indicated that more complete information on population characteristics at a municipal level (e.g. waste generation rates, household size) would be particularly useful if it were more easily available.

The Branch did not indicate any new applications of demographics. While current sources are considered generally adequate, a need was expressed for a central source of demographic information somewhere in the Ministry



to ensure that the most current and complete data are accessible.

B. Regional Operations Division

All branches within this Division utilize demographic data, in varying capacities.

Environmental Approvals and Project Engineering.

Demographics are utilized in five types of activities within this branch:

1) **Water and Sewer Project Design Evaluation.** In evaluating the design of proposed water and sewage facilities, the Value Engineering Section assesses the present and "design year" capacities of facilities in terms of the populations they are intended to serve. Data on current and projected population and total number of households are used to estimate the required capacity of proposed works. Household size (average number of individuals per household) is used to calculate the average flow per household. The Municipal Directory serves as the primary source for these data, with additional input from consultants as needed, such as in generating population projections. This information is considered generally adequate except where municipalities are planning new developments which are not included in Official Plans, often resulting in inaccurate projections of service requirements. Oftentimes municipal officials are hesitant to provide relevant information on planned developments.

2) **Water and Sewer Financial Monitoring.** The Project Control Section monitors and records provincial commitments and expenditures for direct grant projects and provincial water and sewer programs. The level of subsidy provided in such projects is currently determined by the projected total area population in the service area.

The Branch uses engineering consultants to develop the required population growth from which future growth is extrapolated. A major problem in this area is the lack of accurate data on current or historical populations for small communities below the township level (e.g. hamlets), for which such data are not available. This gap makes it difficult to generate accurate projections which will be accepted by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), with the result that such estimates are frequently challenged at OMB hearings. Staff emphasized that this lack of information is a serious problem and are currently searching for data sources which would better fulfill this need.

3) **OMB Presentations.** As part of its presentation before the OMB on proposed water and sewage projects, the Project Control Section is required by the Board to provide information on the average cost of the proposed works in relation to the average per capita income of serviced residents. Per capita income data are obtained through Municipal Affairs and Housing field staff and are considered suitable.

4) **Facility Approvals.** Part of the approvals process carried out by the Environmental Approvals Section is certifying the need and design requirements for proposed water, sewage and waste facilities. Current and projected population size, number of households and urban-rural distribution serve as key information in evaluating proposed facilities. Population projections are typically generated by consultants and entail extrapolation of previous growth rates, obtained through current and previous editions of the Municipal Directory. Such forecasts are then adjusted up or down according to additional information on the communities in question. Projected population estimates are typically biased toward

higher growth since a primary concern is to avoid under-sizing facilities. This approach has proven satisfactory and additional data are not considered necessary, although population projections such as those supplied by SSB would be potentially useful.

5) **Land Use Compatibility Studies.** The Operational Services Section occasionally conducts studies in which demographic information plays a role. For example, a land use compatibility study was carried out in 1981 to identify the number and source of complaints near specific industries. Characteristics of the population within a certain radius of specified industries (e.g. density, dwelling types, ethnic composition) were compiled to develop a better understanding of the population from which complaints were received. STATSCAN data were used for this study.

No potential new applications were identified by the Environmental Approvals and Project Engineering Branch.

**Regional Branches.** Demographic statistics are used by all of the six regional branches in similar capacities, primarily related to establishing servicing requirements for water, sewage and waste projects.

1) **Establishment of Servicing Requirements.** All Regions assemble information on current and projected future demands placed on water, sewage and waste services, which is used primarily to identify future servicing requirements. Current rates of waste/sewage generation and water consumption are calculated from various population data, including total service area population, number of dwellings and/or households and household size. Population projections serve as essential information in identifying future servicing requirements since increased demands for such services are primarily a function of population



growth. Projections also play a critical role in carrying out rate reviews and operating cost projections, which are used to estimate the per capita share of additional taxes required to fund major servicing requirements. While the Regions are involved in the development of such projections, their primary role is in providing relevant data to the Capital Financing and Revenue Branch, which carries the major responsibility for producing projections on which financing and funding decisions are based (see below under **Capital Financing and Revenue**).

Southwest Region indicated that in some cases (e.g. resort areas) it also uses income and age profiles of communities in order to evaluate a municipality's ability to finance new systems. In all regions, current population is used as a criterion in establishing the eligibility of small municipalities for grants (7,500 being the cut-off).

Regional staff rely primarily on the Municipal Directory and local municipal records for this information, with some input from MMAH staff, Official Plans and consultants. There was a mixed response on the question of how adequate these sources are. In some cases the available data are considered satisfactory, but the following limitations were also noted:

- a) a lack of population data on small communities and hamlets;
- b) the Municipal Directory is frequently out of date;
- c) information required from municipal clerks is often difficult to obtain;
- d) discrepancies sometimes occur between data provided by the Directory and the municipalities themselves; and
- e) population projections are usually adequate to serve the immediate need, but are not found to be particularly accurate.

2) **Lake Capacity Surveys.** Several Regions carry out studies and surveys to estimate future contaminant loadings (e.g. Lake Simcoe Management Study) or determine the capacity of certain lakes to accommodate further development. In these studies, current and projected data on population size, number of dwellings and urban-rural distribution provide a basis for identifying development patterns. Projections have been developed primarily through extrapolation of historical growth rates. STATSCAN and municipal records are primary data sources and have generally been acceptable, although STATSCAN data are often out-of-date and are not broken down into the areas relevant to such studies, such as lakes or watersheds.

3) **Approvals Requirements.** Some approvals requirements for water, waste and sewage facilities are based on current municipal population, as in determining whether a hearing is required under the EP Act (if population exceeds 1,500). Population data available in the Municipal Directory have been sufficient for this purpose.

4) **Low Cost Alternatives Program.** In administering the Ministry's Low Cost Alternatives Program for sewage and water systems, Regions utilize data on total population and the number and type of dwellings to determine the impact of the program on local water quality and quantity. Data sources include the Municipal Directory, the municipality itself, the assessment office and surveys conducted to identify area impacts. These sources are considered adequate for the purpose.

5) **Air Quality Monitoring Program (Northwest Region).** The Northwest Region uses current area/municipal data on population size and distribution to assist in determining the appropriate number and location of air quality monitoring sites. The Municipal Directory and Ontario Statistics serve as acceptable sources for this effort.

**Potential New Uses.** The following potential new uses for demographic data were cited by Regional staff:

- a) Central Region indicated that if population data were available for non-standard areas such as watersheds or airsheds, further studies and analyses would be possible (e.g. airshed studies around major air pollution sources). In addition, population data for small hamlets not currently provided would be useful in estimating servicing requirements and costs. Similarly, Northeast Region also indicated that information on the number of downstream users and drawers of water would be useful in determining the downstream water quality impacts of treatment plant discharges and spills.
- b) Northwest Region suggested that accurate information on projected trends in cottage populations would be valuable in carrying out water quality inventories of candidate lakes being considered for recreational development.
- c) Northeast Region would find population projections at the municipal level useful in evaluating applications for new landfill sites and also in carrying out other responsibilities.



C. Capital Finance and Administration Division

Within this Division, only the Capital Financing and Revenue Branch currently makes use of demographic information.

Capital Financing and Revenue. The Project Financial Management Section carries out rate reviews of water and sewage facilities, in the context of the Province's grant program to municipalities. Because servicing requirements and costs are largely determined by population, demographic characteristics and trends play a critical role in such reviews.

Current and previous municipal populations are used to estimate 20 year forecasts for projected serviced populations as a basis for calculating service rates over that period. Projections are developed by first examining historical data on population growth (going back a minimum of five years) and then modifying this growth rate according to additional information on the community or communities in question (e.g. economic outlook, Provincial spending, employment outlook). The number of households serviced is used to determine the service cost per household. Employment profiles and per capita income data are used to estimate the affordability of services and the economic impact of rate increases.

The primary data sources include the Municipal Directory, the municipality, the Regional Operations Division, and consultants where necessary. The Ministry of Industry and Trade provides the employment profiles. The overall adequacy of these data sources is considered poor. Accurate estimates of projected serviceable population are difficult to estimate from current population data, and estimates produced by Regional Operations and the municipalities are often in conflict. Forecasts used in

past years have proven to be too high because of the erroneous assumption that the provision of services themselves would stimulate growth. These overestimations have resulted in substantial rate increases as lower growth rates were subsequently realized. The Ministry now questions population forecasts which are not consistent with current trends. A major part of the problem may lie in the fact that current population data are provided for administrative units (municipalities, counties), which differ from service areas. The employment profile provided by Industry and Trade is highly useful information but is by now out of date (last issued in 1980) and does not provide information on all municipalities.

The Capital Financing and Revenue Branch emphasized the need for accurate information on population and other demographic characteristics (per capita income, employment problems) according to designated service areas. The Branch stressed that an up-dated and comprehensive edition of the Industry and Trade profile would be invaluable. It also indicated that information which identified specific growth areas within service areas would be valuable in assessing the feasibility of new projects, particularly in the case of special and marginal developments. No new potential uses were identified by this Branch.

D. Branches Reporting to the Deputy Minister

Communications. The Communications Branch utilizes demographic information in supporting its communications outreach activities. Demographic characteristics of populations (e.g. age, income, education) in different areas of the Province are used to identify target audiences for information campaigns. STATSCAN population figures and media statistics (e.g. newspaper circulation, TV coverage)

are used to estimate the potential coverage of information placed through specific media (e.g. TV, radio, print).

Policy and Planning Branch. Policy and Planning Branch uses demographic information primarily in the preparation of socio-economic studies and also in reviewing reports and programs developed elsewhere within the Ministry.

1) **Socio-economic studies.** Population characteristics are often important information in assessing the magnitude, type and distribution of impacts of environmental conditions, standards and programs (e.g. abatement) on affected populations (for instance, identifying the population(s) at risk from specific hazards such as SO<sub>2</sub> and dioxin emissions). Studies of this type utilize a range of demographic data, depending on the focus and nature of the study, and may include current population, income and employment profiles, urban-rural distribution, and number of households. Recent examples of such studies include a socio-economic analysis of rehabilitating the English-Wabigoon River system, a consumer survey on beverage container uses and preferences, and a report estimating the socio-economic impacts of acid rain (Synthesis Report).

Sources used for these data include STATSCAN, the Municipal Directory and consultants. These have proven to be generally adequate, although not always sufficiently current nor broken into relevant areas such as watersheds.

2) **Policy and Management Review.** In reviewing reports and documents generated elsewhere in the Ministry, the Branch sometimes seeks to confirm demographic information where this information provides an important basis for major projects and programs. Often it is difficult to carry out such confirmation since the source of the data presented is not stated and/or an independent



source is not available through which to provide confirmation. The need for a central source of reliable and current data on demographics was identified.

3) **Management-By-Results.** The Management-By-Results system coordinated by the Policy and Planning Branch currently includes some demographic information supplied by Regional Operations in such areas as water and sewage services, which is used as a measure of workload and program effectiveness. The MBR system is now under review and may be expanded to include additional demographic data where relevant.

E. Intergovernmental Relations and Strategic Projects Division

Little use is made of demographic information within this Division, although a couple of potential new uses were identified.

Intergovernmental Relations Office. Under the terms of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement with the federal government, the Ministry generates estimates of future demand on Great Lakes water resources. This information, broken down by urban and rural regions, is calculated from population projections for lake basins. The STATSCAN data currently used are generally inadequate for this purpose since population figures are not provided on the basis of watersheds or drainage areas, thereby requiring interpolation of county level data.

APIOS. APIOS does not currently utilize demographic data, but indicated that aggregate characteristics of lake area populations would be useful information in identifying changes in recreational uses resulting from acid precipitation and other forms of environmental pollution.

Waste Disposal Site Inventory. No current uses are reported, but as procedures for updating this inventory are further refined and become more precise, demographic information on area populations may be incorporated.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Overall, 14 branches within the Ministry, particularly in the Regional Operations Division, use demographic information in carrying out 21 types of activities or projects. The major uses of such data fall into four broad categories:

- 1) estimating future requirements for water, sewage and waste facilities (52% of the 21 reported project types);
- 2) calculating pollution loadings through population estimates (24% of the projects);
- 3) identifying populations currently or potentially affected by specific environmental programs, conditions or pollution (24%); and
- 4) determining community size where it serves as a criterion for facility approval requirements or assistance program eligibility (10%).

Current and/or future projections of population size comprise the primary type of demographic information used in Ministry projects, utilized in 81% of project types reported. Measures roughly comparable to population size are also used in some cases, including current or projected number of households (38%) and number of dwelling units (10%). The urban vs rural distribution of population within a specified area is another commonly used type of

data (43%). Per capita income is used in 24% of project types and household size (i.e. number of individuals per household) in 10%.

Municipal populations comprise the predominant level of aggregation used in Ministry projects involving demographics, in part because municipalities are the smallest level of aggregate data generally available in Ontario. Municipal populations are roughly comparable to service area populations for water, sewage and waste facilities, although discrepancies have caused some problems in relying on municipal data for service area projections. Some projects focus on populations defined according to geographic regions (e.g. watersheds), although data are not available in such areas and must be estimated from municipal or county level data. Demographic information at the county, regional and province-wide levels is used to a lesser extent.

The importance of demographic information in program planning and decision-making varies from project to project, in some cases providing critical input into major decisions (e.g. design capacity of water and sewage treatment facilities) while in others serving primarily as supplementary information (evaluating the feasibility of source separation projects, communications outreach). Overall, demographic data figure prominently in MOE projects where such information is used: in 62% of the project types, such data were considered "very important", while in another 33% they were considered "somewhat important", in making decisions and plans.

The primary data sources used by Ministry staff consist of the Municipal Directory published by MMAH (used in 62% of projects), and statistics furnished by STATSCAN (52%). Other sources include municipal governments (19%), other provincial ministries (MMAH, MTE) (19%), consultants (14%)



and other MOE branches (14%). The adequacy of these sources is somewhat mixed. In many cases the sections or branches reported that available data were quite sufficient for their purposes. Yet close to half (48%) indicated some gap or limitation, which in some cases was relatively minor while in others was more serious, as in the case of Project Financial Management where inaccurate population projections have hindered proper facility design. The most prominent gap in current data sources is a lack of population data (current and projected) for a specific area of concern, whether it is small municipalities and hamlets, urban versus rural distribution, or geographically defined areas such as watersheds. Provincially generated population projections currently produced by SSB are not particularly useful since these provide data at the County, Region or District level, which in most cases is too gross a level of aggregation for MOE purposes. Available data have in some cases proven to be out-of-date, while in others discrepancies have been encountered between two or more different sources. This situation is likely to worsen in the future as the Municipal Directory will be now updated once every three years rather than annually. The fact that several branches cited the need for a central MOE source of current demographic data further indicates that data sources which are available may not be particularly accessible.

Overall, it appears that the essential demographic information needs of the Ministry are being met through currently available sources. However, for some functions required information is not available and these gaps have hindered Ministry efforts, particularly in estimating future servicing requirements and obtaining accurate demographic information for relevant areas of concern. Moreover, it is apparent that many current users are unaware of demographic information generated elsewhere in

the Ministry. In some cases, similar data needs exist in several branches, but little sharing of data appears to be taking place.

This survey is intended to serve as a basis for further examination and discussion of specific data needs within the Ministry and more generally the role of demographic information within MOE. The following recommendations are offered as first steps in addressing the problems and gaps identified in this report.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Notify the Statistical Services Branch (Ministry of Treasury and Economics), through the Resource Policy Field Working Group, of MOE data needs not currently supplied through available sources. These needs may be shared by other ministries (such as MNR) and a joint request may be made to address these needs in subsequent data bases generated by the Provincial and/or Federal governments.
- 2) The Policy and Planning Branch continue to liaise with primary data users within MOE to identify and discuss in greater depth current limitations, data needs and potential improvements.
- 3) The Policy and Planning Branch act as a central clearing-house for demographic information within MOE, for use by all MOE branches as needed. The purpose of this clearing-house is to provide access to current data from all available sources and achieve greater consistency in the use of data both within MOE and with other government agencies.

- 4) Explore the feasibility of developing a standardized approach for transforming available data into non-municipal areas or aggregates relevant to MOE needs. This approach would probably require either the development of a new computerized data base or greater access to existing ones.





APPENDIX: SURVEY FORM

BRANCH/STRATEGIC PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION/UNIT: \_\_\_\_\_ SENT TO: \_\_\_\_\_

SURVEY ON THE USE OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION IN MOE

In response to a new emphasis now being placed on better coordination and use of demographic information in government, this Ministry is conducting a brief survey of all branches and strategic projects to identify current internal uses of demographic information. Demographic information in this context can be defined as those features used to characterize the province's population (or subunits of it, e.g. municipal, county), such as age, income, number of households, ethnic background and urban-rural distribution. Such information may be used to define the current population or project future populations.

While demographics do not play as prominent a role in MOE's activities as they do in other ministries (particularly in the Social Policy Field), such information is nevertheless used in a number of areas within the Ministry, such as the use of population projections as a basis for the expansion of sewer and water treatment services.

The purpose of this survey is to inventory all uses of demographic information in MOE as a basis for identifying the Ministry's data needs in this area. We are sending this survey to you as a person who is responsible for an area of the Ministry in which demographic information might be used, whether in research, special studies, program planning or program delivery. Please complete the survey and return it to your branch or project director no later than December 15, 1983. Results of this survey will be made available and data needs which are identified will be addressed.

If you have any questions concerning this survey, please contact Keith Neuman or Christine Lucyk in the Policy and Planning Branch (965-7984).

1. Does your branch or section currently make any use of demographic characteristics of the Ontario population (or subunits of it) in carrying out its responsibilities and activities? (Check circle)

☐ Yes

☐ No — PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 3 —>

- 1a. Please check those demographic characteristics which are used. Add any additional ones not listed at the bottom.

Aggregate Characteristics (by Province, county, region or municipality)

\_\_\_\_\_ population (current or projected)

\_\_\_\_\_ number of households

\_\_\_\_\_ number of dwelling units

\_\_\_\_\_ geographic/regional distribution

\_\_\_\_\_ urban-rural distribution

\_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Characteristics

\_\_\_\_\_ age

\_\_\_\_\_ gender

\_\_\_\_\_ income

\_\_\_\_\_ mother tongue

\_\_\_\_\_ family/household size

\_\_\_\_\_ occupation

\_\_\_\_\_ community size

\_\_\_\_\_ urban-rural

\_\_\_\_\_ dwelling type (apt., house)

\_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_



2. Current Use of Demographic Information

**INSTRUCTIONS:** We are interested in having you provide us with a few brief details about the demographic information you currently use.

On the following pages, please answer a few questions for each program, project or activity in which demographic information is used. Specifically, we would like to know:

- . the type of demographic information used (e.g. population projection, community size)
- . how this information is used (e.g. estimate future demand for services)
- . source of information (STATSCAN, consultants)
- . how important the information is in program planning and decision-making
- . is the information adequate, in terms of availability, relevancy and accuracy?

The following sample provides an example of the question format and the types of information we are interested in obtaining.

<b>SAMPLE</b>	
<b>PROGRAM/PROJECT/ACTIVITY:</b>	Dirty Lakes Management Program
<b>COMPLETED BY:</b> John Doe	
<b>Demographic Information</b>	
<b>Purpose - How Information is Used</b>	
<b>Source of Information</b>	
a. population projections (Dirty Lakes Counties)	use projections to estimate future demand for water and recreation use
STATSCAN	
How Important is Information in Decision/Plans?: 0 very important 1 somewhat important 2 not important	
Is Information Adequate?: 0 yes 1 no 2 explain on back	

Please use one full page for each program/project/activity, listing it by name at the top. If you have a large number of projects of the same type for which the same demographic information applies, complete one page for that type of project.

Space is provided on each page for listing up to three separate demographic characteristics. If more are relevant to a particular program, use an additional sheet. Similarly, if you want to add more detail than space is provided for, use any unused portion of that sheet and/or the back.

If additional sheets are needed, please contact Keith Neuman at 965-7984.

**PROGRAM/PROJECT/ACTIVITY:**

COMPLETED BY:

(name & phone #)

### Demographic Information

## Purpose - How Information is Used

## Source of Information

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## How Important is Information in Decision/Plans?:

very important

**O**  
somewhat  
important

0 not important

Is Information Adequate?:

0  
yes

no  $0 \rightarrow$  explain on back

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## How Important is Information in Decision/Plans?:

0  
very  
important

**O** somewhat important

0 not important

Is Information Adequate?:

0 yes

no  $0 \rightarrow$  explain on back

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## How Important is Information in Decision/Plans?:

very important

0 somewhat important

0 not important

Is Information Adequate?:

0  
yes

no  $0 \rightarrow$  explain on back

3. Additional Uses

One of the purposes of this survey is to identify any new uses of demographic information which would be of either potential or actual value to work carried out in your branch or section, assuming that such information was available. Perhaps there were previously completed projects for which such information would have been useful if it had been available at the time.

Please take time to consider whether there are any new or additional uses to which you might valuably put such information if it were available, based on either past experience or anticipated future needs.

Are there any new uses to which your branch or section could usefully put demographic information if it were available? (Please check)

0

Yes

0

No

GO TO QUESTION 4

3a. Please provide the following information for each new use you have in mind.

PROJECT	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION NEEDED	PURPOSE
1. _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If you need more space, use the back of this page.



4. Do you have any additional comments or questions pertaining to the use, availability or adequacy of demographic information in your branch or section? Please use the space below and the back of this page if necessary.

Thank you for your cooperation and effort in completing this survey. We may contact you at a later date to clarify or explore further the information you have provided. If you have any questions regarding this survey or are interested in finding out about the results, please contact Keith Neuman or Christine Lucyk in the Policy and Planning Branch (965-7984).

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM IMMEDIATELY TO YOUR BRANCH OR PROJECT DIRECTOR**

